

## Foreword

This book is the outcome of an attempt to answer a seemingly naïve question: “What is it that makes a collection of sentences into a story?”. I examined a variety of language phenomena suspected of playing a role in the building of a story.

I have used as my data short stories by Stanisław Lem, an author who needs no introduction and a choice that does not need to be defended from the point of view of the artistic value of the text. I see *The Stories of Pirx the Pilot* as excellent material for analysis since they represent sophisticated contemporary Polish fiction (as opposed to colloquial, unedited stories), with each of the stories actually “telling a story” and “making a point”.

The study is conducted through a very close reading of Lem’s text and is abundant in examples; often quite lengthy quotations are needed to found my arguments. I believe that no linguistic investigation can be based on self-made language specimens, least of all investigations into narrative structure. I refrained from fully glossing the examples and offered instead relevant grammatical information and English translation. I made an effort to keep the translation as close to the Polish original as English would allow and I am aware of the fact that for literary purposes quite a different rendering would be required.

I was very fortunate to conduct my study in the inspiring environment of the Department of Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, being able to discuss parts of the book with colleagues from my Department and the Department of Classics. I wish to thank Ariel Shisha-Halevy for reading an early version of this book and for his valuable comments. I am especially indebted to Hannah Rosén for her penetrating reading of the manuscript and her readiness

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Any errors and misinterpretations that might be found in the book are, of course, mine alone.

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